

MIAMI BEACH

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PRESS RELEASE

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With 11,000 sandbags, artist builds outdoor theater to spark discussion on environmental conservation

“Sand: Amphitheater, Theater and Arena” is part of artist Misael Soto’s residency with ArtCenter/South Florida and city of Miami Beach

Miami Beach, FL – What are the long-term impacts of building an entire city on what was once a sandbar and mangrove swamp?

Misael Soto asks that question through **“Sand: Amphitheater, Theater, Arena,”** where the visual artist will construct a gathering and performance space on Miami Beach from 11,000 sandbags. Over the course of three events beginning Oct. 28, the structure at Collins Park, steps from the ocean, will welcome residents with artistic programming designed to build common ground around what sustainable living might mean in South Florida.

The “Sand...” installation is part of ArtCenter/South Florida’s Art in Public Life Residency, where Soto is embedded with the city government of Miami Beach, offering a fresh perspective on its resiliency plans.

“Miami Beach will be going through some serious changes in our lifetime, as will our entire planet. To prepare, we need to be learning from each other and empowering one another. Sand... will be a gathering place for all South Floridians to do just that,” Soto said.

The workshops, performances, screenings, readings, and roundtable discussions use the material of sand as a lens to explore how South Florida became ground zero for rising tides, and how the community can come together to live more in balance with South Florida’s ecosystem. The artists and participants include HistoryMiami Museum Resident Historian Dr. Paul George, historian and author Dr. Marvin Dunn, Miami Beach Director of Sustainability Elizabeth Wheaton, post-punk performance artists Donzii, poet Glenda Romualdo and artist Laurencia Strauss, who throughout the events will trade coconut-flavored pops for visitors’ musings on what adaptation means to them.

"In collaboration with ArtCenter/South Florida, the City of Miami Beach created the Artist Residency Program as a means to spark discussion and welcome innovative ideas, as we consistently look to perfect our environmental and resiliency initiatives," said the city's Cultural Affairs Manager Brandi Reddick. "I'm excited to see how Soto's first temporary public art piece with the city, through its interactive elements as a public forum, accomplishes this, while also inviting those individuals that haven't been a part of the conversation before."

Why sand as a medium? Sand has been an essential ingredient in Miami Beach's growth, from the island's beginnings to its development as an international tourism destination, Soto explained. The city's main tourism draw, its beaches, are also its first line of defense against rising seas, particularly during storms. And yet development and the built environment aren't always aligned with the fluid nature of biological forces. In Miami Beach, and throughout Florida's coasts, beaches must be replenished due to natural erosion. Sand is a finite resource. Around the world, sand, an essential ingredient in concrete, is being depleted as development continues at unprecedented rates.

In fact, the sand being used to create the installation was brought in from Central Florida, and will be given to the City of Miami Beach for reuse after the event.

Here's how to participate – all activities to take place in Collins Park, 2100 Collins Ave., Miami Beach:

Sand: Amphitheater: Sunday, Oct. 28, 4-6 p.m.: Using sand as a literal and metaphorical foundation, the event will consist of a multidisciplinary exploration of the area's history and its ecosystem, and examine how our decisions along the way led us to present day South Florida.

Sand: Theater: Saturday, Nov. 3, 5-7 p.m.: As the structure transforms into a performance space, local artists and writers are invited to tell new stories through performance, music, film, and readings of poetry and prose. These will be retellings of the past as well as potential futures and parallel universes, with the hope of building a collective present.

Sand: Arena: Saturday, Nov. 17, 3-5 p.m.: What can we learn about human consumption and our effects on the planet by focusing on one simple natural resource? As the space transforms into an arena, a wide range of voices will gather to share, question and learn from each other, in the Greek tradition of dialogue and exchange.

A schedule of programming is available at artcentersf.org/sand.

Join the conversation online with #SandMiamiBeach

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